

Crisis Education Project Profile

March 2005

Project: Rebuilding Education and Civil Society (RECS)

Locations: Southern Sudan (8 primary schools):
Tambura and Ezo counties of Western Equatorial region

Implementing Organization: CARE International in Southern Sudan

Type of Programming: Enhancing the quality of Civil Society to be education service providers for the community school

Target group/beneficiaries: Teachers (in-service and pre-service); Community Education Committee members, County education officials, and students

Stage: Crisis (long-term conflict and internally displaced populations)

Environmental Context of the Program

SOCIAL: With parts of southern Sudan in various states of war over the last 20 years, many of its institutions have been destroyed and its communities have been in a constant state of upheaval and disruption. The School Baseline Assessment estimates that 30% of eligible school-age children are enrolled in some kind of school (in the 1,096 schools surveyed). Twenty six percent of the 227,899 students enrolled are female, and 12% of all students enter secondary school.¹ There is also a gender disparity of one (female) to every four males in the school system and there is a steady decline in the retention rate. Out of the total number of pupils in grades 1-8, only 12% are enrolled in the upper primary grades (5-8). The (mostly volunteer) teachers have been the backbone of the education system. Education data shows that only 7% of the teaching force is considered trained, i.e., six months or more of training.

CULTURAL/RELIGION: Most southern Sudanese are Christians or adherents of local religious systems lived in southern Sudan. Islam had made inroads into the south, but more through the need to know Arabic than a profound belief in the tenets of the Quran. There has been fierce resistance to the imposition of the Sharia laws; the SPLM opposes the imposition of Islamic law. The population of the southern Sudan uses a variety of African tribal languages only recently reduced to writing using the Roman script.

ECONOMIC: Sudan is still plagued with periodic droughts, and limited infrastructure. Most rural households heavily on agriculture and cattle raising for their subsistence. On a daily basis, a high number of Sudanese face chronic food insecurity. Valuable economic resources (e.g., oil) continue to be diverted from investment in development initiatives to fund military action. Infrastructure in southern Sudan remains very basic with no standardized currency, banking or postal systems and very limited transportation systems.

Political Relationships: The civil war in southern Sudan, which is primarily between the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Government of Sudan (Khartoum) has entered its twentieth year. The confrontation between the Khartoum government and

¹ School Baseline Assessment, UNICEF/OLS and Africa Education Trust. May 2001.

the factions of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), and inter-faction conflicts have contributed to the economic and social dislocation of more than 3.5 million persons in Bar El Ghazal, Upper Nile, Eastern and Western Equatoria and Jonglei provinces.

Program Description

TARGET GROUP: Beneficiaries include students (male and female), teachers (in-service and pre-service) Community Education Committees² and local education authorities. This project works with education personnel to increase access to and improve quality of education programming.

MATERIAL/PHYSICAL RESOURCES: The communities provide labor and in-kind materials to rehabilitate school infrastructure. The program provides construction materials for school rehabilitation/construction, school materials (e.g., notebooks, pencils), school uniforms, and soap to students, and pedagogic materials (New Sudan syllabus, and phase III teacher training modules)³.

FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES: Parents pay an agreed upon registration fee to cover school costs and 4 (out of the 8 schools) provide cash or in-kind (e.g., food) incentives for the teachers because there is no standardized pay; most teachers provide services on a voluntary basis. Cash incentives vary from school to school, but an average incentive is approximately \$20 over the course of the school year. A critical component to improve the quality of the learning environment is the training Community Education Committees (CECs) receive. CECs and County (local authority) education officers receive intensive training in community mobilization, community participation, group organization and management, and project ownership and sustainability. Female community members who have prematurely dropped out of school attended a 1-month pre-service literacy and numeracy training and on completion return to village schools to teach basic mathematics and English to pre-school and grade 1 and 2 students.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION: The total involvement of the community in implementation and management of the project is a move aimed at ensuring project sustainability. Significant effort is required to change the community members perceptions and to enhance active community participation since they are more accustomed to relief and emergency interventions as opposed to development interventions. CECs develop action plans with key activities and targets listed to improve the school. On a bi-annual basis, community members meet with CECs to review action plans, identify problems encountered and suggest solutions.

TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM: Teachers (pre-service, in-service, and IDPs) attend teacher training phase courses. The New Sudan³ education authorities are in the process of developing a comprehensive professional teacher development curriculum. Currently there are a series of phase training modules to upgrade teachers' competencies and provide accreditation for grades 1-8.

² Community Education Committees are similar to Parent Teacher Associations.

³ New Sudan refers to southern Sudan education authorities. Under the direction of the Education Secretariat, a plethora of teacher training activities, most of which have been focused on initial teacher preparation, have been brought together to form a unified program of foundational teacher education in the form of a sequence of three phase courses, each three months in length. The phase courses were the result of a need on the one hand to unify a disparate system and to respond to the need for providing a higher quality of teacher education than was being provided in the level.

Programming Interventions: Impact and Effectiveness

ACCESS: CECs have been trained in strategies of community mobilization, action planning facilitation, project ownership and sustainability. This has led to increased school and community capacity to address local school needs. The CECs are now able to sensitize parents and the community in general, on the need to send their children, especially girls, to school and also find ways of supporting their teachers. This initiative by the CECs has led to a steady increase in school enrollment in the 8 CARE-supported pilot schools from 1,511 in June 2000 to 2,343 in June 2002, reflecting a 55% increase in school enrollment and retention. Of the 832 new enrollments, 401 are girls, reflecting a 48.19% increase in girls' enrollment and retention particularly in the lower grades of Grade 1 to Grade 5. The enrollment of girls has been impressive and the project credits its focus on providing females with incentives (i.e., school uniforms and a bar of soap per female student per month for washing the school uniforms). However, it should be noted that though this initiative has contributed to the increased enrollment of the girl child in our pilot schools, a negative consequence has been a gradual resentment of the approach and towards girls by the boys and teachers.

MANAGEMENT: Community members and especially parents are increasingly realizing that the success of this intervention depends on the effective establishment and empowerment of CECs in each school, thus increasingly giving the mandate to CECs to run/manage the affairs of the schools to CEC members with minimal interference.

QUALITY: The community in Tambura was initially not accustomed to active participation in education and other project development activities. The people expect the NGOs to do most of the things for them. Part of this problem was due to the fact the community did not know in what ways they should participate in the education activities. Training them on issues of community mobilization, defining clear roles and responsibilities of all program stakeholders and developing reflective action plans has tremendously improved their participation.

OVERALL PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: (Rights-Based Approaches) CEC members are increasingly being “democratically” elected as opposed to hand-picking, which has resulted in increased quality community participation. Some schools have started implementing the strategy of annual elections. For example, one primary school recently realized that their CEC chairman and some CEC members were not committed to their assignments, thus leading to poor implementation of their action plans. When the office-bearers 1-year term came to an end, fresh elections were held and the non-committed members were replaced with those known to be pro-active.

EQUIP1: Building Educational Quality through Classrooms, Schools, and

Communities is a multi-faceted program designed to raise the quality of classroom teaching and the level of student learning by effecting school-level changes. EQUIP1 serves all levels of education, from early childhood development for school readiness, to primary and secondary education, adult basic education, pre-vocational training, and the provision of life-skills. Activities range from teacher support in course content and instructional practices, to principal support for teacher performance, and community involvement for improving school management and infrastructure. EQUIP1 works with food for education issues and contributes to the provision of education and training in crisis and post-crisis environments.

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is the lead organization responsible for implementing EQUIP1 and is joined by fourteen outstanding partners: Academy for Educational Development, Aga Khan Foundation USA, CARE, Discovery Channel Global Education Fund, Education Development Center, Howard University, International Reading Association, The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Juárez & Associates, Inc., Michigan State University, Save the Children, Inc., Sesame Workshop, University of Pittsburgh, and World Education, Inc..

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Web site: <http://www.EQUIP123.net>
Email: EQUIP1@air.org